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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Before the Patent Office Board of Appeals

APPLICANT: R.E. Williams
SERIAL NO: 10/688,179
FILED: October 16, 2003
FOR: SEPARABLE TAG FOR BAGS
OR OTHER CONTAINERS

GAU: 3611
EXAMINER: J. Silbermann
St. Louis, Missouri
Date: February 15, 2006
DN: 7348

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I. Real Parties in Interest

The parties and interest in this particular application include the inventor, Robert E. Williams, and the Company to which he has assigned this application, Sev-Rend Corporation, of St. Louis, Missouri.

II. Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no related appeals or interference proceedings pertaining to the subject matter of this patent application.

III. Status of Claims

Applicant filed its Amendment A in the United States Patent Office, and the examiner issued a final rejection dated August 25, 2005. In the final rejection, the examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 9-14, of this application. It is from this final rejection that Applicant has filed its Notice of Appeal and the Brief herein.

Thus, the claims under appeal are 1-4, and 9-14.

IV. Status of Amendments

There have been no subsequent amendments filed after the final rejection that issued from the examiner.

V. Claimed Subject Matter

This invention relates to what is identified as Separable Tags for Bags and or Other Containers. Thus, in referring to the drawings, FIG. 1 shows a separable tag 1(p.6) for use upon bags or other containers. The tag includes a body portion 2(p.6), with a narrowed integral neck portion 3(p.6), such that the neck portion, because it is of a narrowed dimension, may be stapled, crimped, wire tied, or clipped to the upper end of a bag, such as the bag B (p.6) once vegetables or other produce have been enclosed therein, for marketing. See, for example, FIG. 5.

The tag is made from a bottom layer 4(p.6) that extends throughout the length of the series of tags, as they are stamped and cut from a roll, so that the series of tags, continuous, may be formed into a rolled configuration, and unwound therefrom, during usage, either when manually or by machine applied to the produce bags, during their application. The neck portion 3 of the bottom layer 4 is continuous, so that the entire tag includes integrally base or the bottom portion, in its integral neck, as can be seen. The bottom layer may be formed of paper, plastic, or other synthetic printable material. The bottom layer has a release coat of a polymer adhesive applied thereto. This is a form of varnish that allows for the easy peel off of the top layer, as shown at 5(p.6), and the release coat may be of an ultraviolet silicon that is cured with an ultraviolet lamp, once applied, so as to provide for the tackiness needed when laminating the top and bottom layers together, during fabrication of the tags, and before they are stamped or cut into the tag configuration, as can be noted. The top layer for each tag can be made of a paper, or film, such as polypropylene, polyethylene, polystyrene, PVC, etc., as explained. If paper is used as the top layer, then the adhesive to be applied will be a dry release type of adhesive as described in the specification. If it is a polymer film or the like that is used as the top layer, then a repositionable adhesive, available upon the market, maybe used. These are identified in the application.

The purpose of the upper peelable layer 5 is to provide a peel-off portion for the tag, which may function as a coupon, manufacture's rebate, cross branding, provide recipe information, or promotional advertisement, as can be understood. The underside of the bottom layer 4 may also contain various types of indicia, such as pricing information, sell-buy date, lot code, recipes, handling and cooking information, UPC code, product or customer branding, or any other type of information that needs to stay with the product, as marketed. It is even just as likely that the upper surface 6(p.7) of the bottom layer may likewise contain further printed indicia, before any adhesive is applied thereto, so that when the upper layer 5 is peeled off, the information will yet be available for viewing upon the surface 6, as to be understood. Thus, the concept of this invention is to provide multiple layers, from a peel-off tag, and a variety of surfaces, upon which various types of information can be applied, as desired and required by the merchandiser.

As can further be noted in FIG. 2, a line of severance is made upon the upper layer 5, so that the upper layer portion, as at 5a (see FIG. 2) as supplied to the tag, will remain in place, but that a severable line, as at 7 (p.7) provides for separation between the neck upper layer, and at the peelable layer 5, as can be seen.

FIG. 3 shows how the tags 1 may be formed continuously so that they may be formed from a roll or sheet of material, having the various layers as identified herein. Then, the tags will be cut to the configuration as shown in FIG. 3, having the narrowing neck portion. During that process, there will be developed a line or perforation formed between each of the tags, as at the upper end of each neck 3, as at 8(p.7), so that each of the tags can be separated, one from another, as they are applied or crimped onto the bags of vegetables or produce, meats, poultry, as during usage, either manually, or by machine. Furthermore, as each tag is being formed, it is printed with indicia that may be applied thereto, upon the variety of surfaces as previously reviewed, so that the tags, as provided in a roll, and supplied to the merchandiser, can have all of the

necessary information readily applied thereto, in preparation for marketing of there contained products. Or, the merchandisers themselves can print various information on to the tags, as desired. But, usually, coupon type information will have been previously printed, as the tags are being formed, through any quality printing process, so as to enhance the appearance of the tags, and the product to which the tags are applied, in preparation for marketing.

FIG. 4 shows how a series of tags are separable, as can be seen at 9(p.8), as they are being used and applied to the product packaging, in the manner is shown in FIG. 5.

As can further be understood, the peelable portions are layers 5 (p.8) may be semi-transparent, so that the coupon or other information applied thereto can be coordinated with the print material furnished upon the upper surface 6 of each of the tags, so as to furnish a semi-three dimensional or holographic appearance to each tag, to add to its attractiveness.

As can further been seen in FIG. 5, each of the tags, when applied to a bag, will be stapled, clipped, wire tied, or otherwise attached, or even heat sealed thereto, to the twisted upper end 10 (p.8) of each bag, during packaging of the food product. As for example, a staple 11(p.8) grips the tag 1, and holds it to the upper end of the bag, as can be noted.

VI. Grounds of Rejection

The examiner, in the final rejection, rejected claims 1-4, 9, 10 and 14, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable over Whipp, patent No. 5,792,536.

The examiner further rejected claims 11 and 12, under §103(a), as being unpatentable over Whipp, and further in view of Kinne, patent No. 3,863,369.

Finally, the examiner rejected claim 13 under §103(a), as being unpatentable over Whipp, and further in view of Heuser, U.S. patent No. 2,953,865.

VII. Argument

Claims 1-4, 9, 10 and 14:

The examiner has initially rejected claims 1-4, 9, 10 and 14, upon 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Whipp, U.S. patent No. 5,791,536.

Applicant has looked over the patent to Whipp, but frankly, just does not see any type of a separable tag, that is formed of multi layers, to the configuration as described by Applicant in claim 1, where each of the tags are comprised of a series of tags, linked together, but capable of separation, and are formed having an integral neck, that is narrower than the tag bottom portion, and which extends upwardly from the bottom portion approximately centrally thereof. Whipp may show a multiple-layer label, actually formed from what would appear to be six layers of material, having first second and third layers, one being formed of a base material, a second layer applied thereto, and a third layer that is releasably attached to the second layer. This is really not Applicant's invention, nor does it even suggest the same. No doubt the Whipp label is designed for marketing promotions, can even be used as an award coupon, or game piece, but other than that fact, it appears to be of an entirely different type of laminate structure, and furthermore, has a configuration that in no way has the appearance of FIGS. 1, 5, or the like, of the current invention, and as described in claim 1, nor can it be used in the manner of the current invention, to be fed off of a roll, as continuously connected tags, wherein portions may be separated, because of strategically located perforations, in the manner as claimed for this current invention.

For prior art to be effective for supporting a rejection based upon obviousness, see the case of *In re Geiger*, 815 F2d. 686 (Fed. Cir. 1987), where the court stated that obviousness cannot be established by combining teachings of prior art to produce the claimed invention, absence of some teaching, suggestion, or incentive supporting that combination.

The examiner attempts to state that Whipp shows a neck of a tag, and somehow the examiner believes that there is a neck shown in its FIG. 4, but Applicant just does not see the same. Hence, it is believed that Whipp, while showing some type of a multi layered label, other than that, just does not provide enough teachings to anyone skilled in the art to make Applicant's claimed invention, as set forth in claim 1, or dependant claims 2-4, nor claim 9. Furthermore, even if you get by the structure of what is described in claim 1, claim 10 describes the specific location where printable information is applied, such as to the bottom layer of the base of the tag. This is set forth in claim 10 of the current application. Whipp's base is defined as a shrinkable base material, does not appear to contain any print material, nor can it accept the same. Thus, Whipp just does not provide anything that makes claim 10 so obvious to one skilled in the art. Finally, in claim 14, the same defining structure for the separable tags for bags is set forth for this current invention, and describes that the upper layer of the tag may be formed of one of paper, polymer film, etc, while the bottom of the tag may be formed on paper, plastic, or the like. Whipp simply states that its bottom layer is formed of a release liner, does not appear to state that printable material such as indicia may be applied thereto, and it does not appear that Whipp identifies his bottom layer as being used for that purpose, but rather it simply functions as a liner for holding a release material. Hence, it is believed patentable subject matter is set forth in these identified claims.

Claims 11 and 12:

The examiner further rejected claims 11 and 12, over the prior patent to Whipp, and further in view of Kinne, U.S. patent No. 3,863,369, as being obvious under § 103(a).

Whipp has already been reviewed, and frankly just as not show the structure for a series of tags, for bags, that are configured of a particular style, so that its upper narrowed neck may be tied or stapled to the twisted end of a bag for food products. Kinne just simply shows a peelable label, having no structure whatsoever related to what is set forth these two claims, but simply shows how individual labels may be made, as in the instance of Kinne, for furnishing a page like label that may be peeled back, to its hinge line 16, for exposing an inner page 11. This really is not what Applicant is doing, nor claiming, and even if Kinne should some how be applied to Whipp, the overall configuration for the Applicant's tag would still not be suggested, in any manner, by this combination of prior art.

Claim 13:

Claim 13 defines how the separable tags of this current invention are separated at their upper neck portions, by a line of perforation. The examiner further cited the Whipp patent in view of Heuser as making the invention obvious to one skilled in the art. Heuser just does not show any type of a neck portion for a label, and nor does Whipp, as previously reviewed. Hence, since there are no neck portions shown in either of these two prior art, it is just not seeing how Heuser can be used to modify Whipp, to come up with answering structure to what is set forth in this dependant claim 14.

VIII. Conclusion

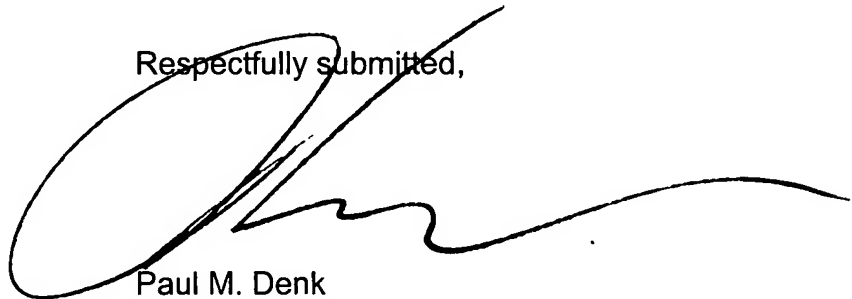
It is submitted that patentable subject matter is set forth in the remaining claims of this application. It is believed that the claimed subject matter is just not rendered so obvious to one of ordinary skilled in the art, nor, is it even suggested by any combination of the prior art as attempted by the examiner. It is just not seen how the prior art could even be modified, to provide for any realistic structure of the type as defined in the claims of this patent application, other than showing, in said art, that laminar labels may be formed. But, Applicant's invention is not just that.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that patentable subject matter is set forth in these remaining claims 1-4, and 9-14, and deserve patentable protection.

The Board's review of this matter would be appreciated.

Enclosed is the appeal brief fee, and if any additional charges are due, please debit our deposit account No. 040731.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Paul M. Denk, is written over the signature line.

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Enclosure

APPENDIX

1. Separable tags for bags or other containers comprising at least one tag, said tags having upper and bottom layers, said tag layers having a bottom portion, said tag bottom portion also having an integral neck extending upwardly therefrom, a series of tags being linked together but capable of being separated for individual usage at the top of each integral neck, the integral neck of each tag capable of being connected to a bag or other container during usage, the integral neck of each tag being substantially narrower than the tag bottom portion and extending upwardly from the said bottom portion approximately centrally thereof, the upper layer of said tag overlying both said bottom portion and its integral neck, the upper layer of each tag being separable between its bottom portion and its neck, the upper layer being adhered to the bottom layer by an adhesive whereby the upper layer of the bottom portion being separable from said bottom portion during usage.

2. The separable tag of claim 1 wherein the upper layer formed of one of paper, plastic, and other synthetic printable material.

3. The separable tag of claim 2 wherein the bottom layer is formed of one of paper, plastic, or other synthetic printable material.

4. The separable tag of claim 3 wherein said adhesive comprises a release coat, and said adhesive being one of ultraviolet silicone, release type adhesive, release coat, and a polymer adhesive.

9. The separable tag of claim 1 wherein the separable top layer of the bottom portion of the tag capable of being imprinted with coupon information, manufacturer rebate information, cross branding, recipe information, and promotional advertising.

10. The separable tag of claim 9 wherein the bottom layer of the base of the tag may be imprinted with pricing information, sale-by date, lot code, recipes, handling information, cooking instructions, UPC code, and product and customer branding indicia.

11. The separable tag of claim 14 wherein the line of separation between the upper layer of the tags and its integral neck being a line cut.

12. The separable tag of claim 11 wherein the top layer of the base of the tag can be peeled from the bottom layer of said base.

13. The separable tag of claim 14 wherein said series of tags are separable at their upper neck portions by a line of perforation.

14. A separable tag for bags or other containers comprising at least one tag, said tag having upper and bottom layers, said tag layers having a bottom portion, said tag bottom portion also having an integral neck extending upwardly therefrom, a series of said tags being linked together but capable of being separated for individual usage at the top of each integral neck, the integral neck of each tag capable of being connected to a bag or other container during usage, the integral neck being substantially narrower than the tag bottom portion, and extending upwardly from the said bottom portion approximately centrally therefrom, the upper layer of said tag overlying both the bottom portion and its integral neck, the upper layer of each tag being separable between its bottom portion and its neck, the upper layer being adhere to the bottom portion by an adhesive whereby the upper layer portion being separable from said bottom portion during usage, the upper layer of said tag being made of one of paper, polymer film, polypropylene, polyethylene, polystyrene, and polyvinylchloride film, the bottom layer of said tag being formed from one of paper, plastic, polymer film, polypropylene, polyethylene, polystyrene, and polyvinylchloride film and other synthetic printable material, wherein there are a series of said tags being connected together continuously for forming a roll of said tags, and the upper of the base, and the bottom portion of the tag being printable to provide for the printing of indicia upon the exposed surfaces of said layers of the formed tag.